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AMERICAN CLASSICISM

The Evening Post for Saturday, Sept. 7, last, contained an article by Professor Ernest G. Sihler, of New York University, on American Classicism. I quote in full the paragraphs relating to the New York Greek Club.

It was in this very town of New York that there was established a Greek Club, December 30, 1857, which club, if it had not lapsed and snuffed itself out ten years ago, would now be looking forward to its fiftieth anniversary and golden jubilee. As it turned out, the club lived and prospered mightily for forty years. Howard Crosby and Henry Drisler were the founders. On that distant December day these two professors, meeting in that humble abode of occasional or periodic contact, a barber-shop, determined to establish a Greek Club. The preparing of papers *about the Classics* soon gave way to that vastly better occupation, *the reading of the Greek Classics*, in rotation of assignment, when the average of ground traversed was about 12-13 pages of Teubner text. These indeed were *Noctes Atticae* more genuine than those of Aulus Gellius, gatherer of antiquarian and grammatical herbaria, botanist of the flowers of the classic Past. Most of those scholars into whose weekly meetings the present writer was invited twenty-eight years ago have passed to the Silent Land, but four stand out above the others.

Henry Drisler, Greek lexicographer, placid and imperturbable, successor and most eminent pupil of Charles Anthon, curiously non-perceptive of the aesthetical and historical side of classic letters, exponent of the second aorist.

Howard Crosby, charmer of souls, vivacious and earnest, free lance in all debates, versatile and incalculable in his sallies, quaint and obstinate defender of faulty and impossible readings.

Isaac Hall, Oriental and Greek scholar, endowed with the genuine scholar's swift and keen perception of the crucial point or of the sore spot in any critical controversy, pugnacious and defiant of mere authority.

Charlton T. Lewis, whose scholarly ideals and earlier training were gotten from Theodore Woolsey and James Hadley of Yale, of the much cited class of 1853. Lewis, I say, whose forms of domestic relaxation included Sanscrit and papers in the highest mathematics, Latin lexicographer, translator, essayist, organizer of reforms in public correction and reformatory institutions, in all of which activities he excelled without apparent effort. Lewis was the best reader in the club, advancing without a trace of hesitating or stumbling, ignoring no difficulty nor airily vaulting it, covering more ground than any reader in that company.

The club read and reread all the Greek Classics, all those called *classici* by Hadrian's Renaissance, Pindar no less than Xenophon; it was not desultory in choice and procedure, but generally pursued each author to the end. Of post-classic writers there were taken up Polybios, Josephus, Plutarch, Lucian, and a few others. It is a curious and significant fact, that one of the later members, an eminent authority and well-known to his generation as a publicist and economic writer, Mr. Horace White, has brought out an altogether admirable version of

Appian. The Greek Club then, and its life and work, were, and deserve to be recorded, in this year of a half-century's retrospect, as the finest vindication (right in this Trader's Babylon) of the nurturing strength and the mysterious charm of classic reading—a veritable graduate school antedating any one formally begun in America, and in its constituency and incentive—*sit venia verbo superbo*—perhaps superior to them all, for all were masters and still all were learners as masters ever are.

Looking back over the earlier history of American classicism the writer observes that at Yale in 1781 there was little Greek except the New Testament, and that even forty-five years later Kingsley was professor of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In 1829-30 there were six "resident graduates". In October, 1830, however, there was held in New York a Literary Convention, the first general meeting of experts desiring to deal with the problems of higher education. Their avowed aim was to form a genuine university in America. Among those in attendance were George Bancroft, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, Robinson of Andover, Gallaudet of Hartford, Bates of Middlebury, Vt., Jared Sparks of Harvard, Stillman of Yale, and Francis Lieber of Boston and Berlin. The classical and the anti-classical spirit were represented by George Lieber and by Gallatin, then a man of sixty-five. The latter, eminent for his services as Jefferson's minister of finance, regarded the Classics as an "impediment arresting a more general diffusion of human knowledge". He advanced the specious thesis (repeated here in New York a few years ago by a distinguished university president): "*The Greeks knew no language but their own, therefore*", etc. He wisely did not go on to the Romans, nor to the Kelts, Goths or Longobards". Thirty-eight years later, in 1868, the American Philological Association was established.

Among the early teachers whose scholarly work still persists were Woolsey and James Hadley of Yale, Beck, Lane, Gildersleeve and Goodwin at Harvard. But despite their brilliant achievements the anti-classical spirit was steadily rising and "after the accession of C. W. Eliot, a chemist, in 1869, to the presidency of Harvard, the conviction that an unrestricted elective system for undergraduates might and should be dovetailed into the quadrennium of our preparatory schools was carried into execution, and then, if I mistake not, the knell of Greek had begun to be rung in America. Sophomores and research—nay, my masters, you cannot get cider from green apples no matter what the label on the cider press". In 1881 appeared the paper of Charles Francis Adams at Harvard, in which he termed Greek a fetich, and in 1882 he became one of the overseers. Dr. Lewis, returning

from his visits to Harvard, would say: "Greek is fast receding at Harvard", "Greek is fading away at Cambridge", "Greek is dying at Harvard".¹

Recent official records at Harvard show "some thirty classical students in a total of 378 graduate students. The work appears in three categories: (1) primarily for undergraduates, (2) for graduates and undergraduates, (3) primarily (therefore not exclusively), for graduates . . . (of the thirty graduate students) sixteen are put down simply for Classics, two for classical and Indic philology, one for classical archaeology, five for classical philology, one for English and Latin, one, just one, for Greek philosophy".

At Yale, of 353 graduate students twenty-eight are recorded for classical courses as follows: Greek, four; Latin, nine; Classics, eight; classical philosophy, one; Latin and Greek, five; history and Latin, one.

At Baltimore in Professor Gildersleeve's seminar there were recently recorded some thirteen men (some fifteen years ago on a visit I counted twenty-five), the same thirteen appear in the Latin seminar also: most of them seem to take linguistic science under Professor Bloomfield as well. Some of the Fellows thirty-one years ago . . . read thirteen hours a day. All intensive reading is extensive, I am sure, in widening enormously range and sympathy . . . when all is close and direct, and translating banished, then all further incentives seem vain and superfluous, it is then that the noble verse of Southey marks a great inward metamorphosis, and a perpetual vocation:

My days among the dead are passed,
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never failing friends are they
With whom I converse day by day.

Mighty minds: at once we are led to discriminate between the cultural and the eruditional elements, between the original letters and the incrustation of many centuries. . . . There is a certain senility in some *seminar* youths, who can cite dittography and haplography, Arcadian and Cypriote dialects, talk of Phyles and Demes, of Ecclesia and Boule, and whose specialism reveals itself in ignorance of enormous masses of classical literature. Let not the academic young person be a pedant before his time, let him remember that he is still, at bottom, in the pre-critical period of life, where most apposite are the words of Macrobius' reminiscent mood: "Tum, cum admirabamur, nondum iudicabamus?" *Weh Euch dass Ihr Enkel seid!* but how can the doctorandus escape being smothered, during his triennium, by the strata of secondary and tertiary matter superimposed since Petrarch? T. E. W.

REVIEWS

The Roman System of Provincial Administration to the Accession of Constantine the Great. By W. T. Arnold. New Edition, revised from the Author's Notes, by E. S. Shuckburgh. Oxford: Blackwell (1906). Pp. xviii + 288. \$2.00.

When Mr. Arnold's essay, which was originally written for the Arnold Prize in the University of Oxford, appeared nearly thirty years ago, it received a warm welcome as the only book in English which dealt with the administration of the Roman provinces. Its faults, however, were appreciated by the author, and it was his desire to revise and expand the work. From the realization of this hope he was prevented by his untimely death, and thus the task of revision has been undertaken by Dr. Shuckburgh. But the editor's alterations are few in number, and, with the exception of the welcome addition of an index, are confined to the bibliography and the notes, and the book remains what it was before—a good collection of facts, based almost entirely on Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, but inadequately treated and badly arranged. In an excessive fear of generalization, though admitting (p. 7) that "the administration was everywhere of much the same type", Mr. Arnold was too unwilling to draw conclusions, and too often presented merely facts instead of principles.

It was, however, in the arrangement of the book that the author was least successful. After dealing in two introductory chapters with the Limits of Period and Subject, and the Method of Acquisition and Organization of a Province, he divided the work into five parts—the Republic, the Early Empire, the Later Empire, Taxation, and Provincial Towns. The results of this arrangement are undue repetitions, unfortunate omissions, and the crowding of chapters with irrelevant material. Thus the *publicani* are discussed in the chapter on the Republic and again in that on Taxation, and both the legions and the census in the chapter on the Early Empire, while the provincial *auxilia* are omitted altogether. Again, the author inserted in the chapter on the Acquisition of a Province an excellent discussion of the Client-princes—a subject which deserves a chapter to itself, especially as the instances in which these kings were used to prepare their subjects for the rule of Rome (p. 16) are too few to make them important factors in the acquisition of provinces. Mr. Arnold's division, furthermore, rendered impossible any systematic treatment of provincial administration. By his chronological arrangement he was forced to deal with the position and powers of the governor in each of three chapters, thereby giving us three separate sections instead of one logically ordered ac-

¹ In a Phi Beta Kappa address delivered at Columbia University a year or two, Mr. Adams, who had then just retired from Harvard Board of Overseers, gave evidence that he had gained a juster appreciation of its educational and cultured value of Greek.